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LETTER DATED 1 NOVEMBER 1994 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PORTUGAL TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Peace-keeping today is for the United Nations a constant and widespread reality. It has brought to life a previously almost dormant set of objectives under the Charter of the United Nations concerning the role of this Organization in the maintenance of international peace and security. The organ primarily responsible for peace-keeping is, without a doubt, the Security Council. Its prerogatives in this field are unassailable. But peace-keeping has evolved into an activity that requires the dynamic and complex management of many multifaceted operations simultaneously in very different parts of the world. In this task, the Security Council and the Secretariat can only benefit from the support and commitment of other Member States, especially from those that today send most of the forces that make up United Nations peace-keeping operations but who do not necessarily sit on the Council.

In this context, we have looked at the proposals contained in a letter addressed to you by the Permanent Representatives of Argentina and New Zealand to the United Nations dated 15 September 1994 (S/1994/1063) and would like to express our support for the ongoing discussions in the Council on procedures for consultations between members of the Security Council, the Secretariat, troop contributors and other countries.

We believe that the current practice of bringing together the members of the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop contributors for informal consultations should be continued and enhanced in order to provide a useful and efficient forum for the exchange of views on the different and ever-changing challenges that each peace-keeping operation inevitably faces. For example, any alteration in the political, military or logistical situation in a particular case will be dealt with far more effectively if those who mandate operations, those who run them and those who contribute forces to the same operations are able to come together and consult quickly and efficiently.

Furthermore, it is our opinion that such a practice of consultations should be activated before the launching of peace-keeping operations. This will also help, among other things, to gauge whether the level of commitment to contribute forces matches the needs of any given operation. As others have already

mentioned, we believe that a greater access to a consultative process for peace-keeping will permit those of us who assign men and women for service with the United Nations better to inform our public. Their support for what we are doing is ultimately indispensable.

I would be grateful if the present letter were circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Pedro CATARINO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Portugal
to the United Nations